

Having said that, I thank my colleague for his schedule for the remainder of the week and next week and I wish him a good weekend.

Mr. ARMEY. I thank the gentleman.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2001

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA.) Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2001

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, June 18, 2001, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 19, 2001, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

□ 1400

DISPENSING WITH CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR ON TUESDAY NEXT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the call of the Private Calendar be dispensed with on Tuesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA.) Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be the express will of this body that every father in America have a glorious weekend.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

FERC LIKELY TO PUT NEW LIMITS ON CALIFORNIA ENERGY PRICES

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report here, on Flag Day, that the oil industry forces of George II are in retreat. A few weeks ago, the Duke of Halliburton, Mr. CHENEY, met with the Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Idaho delegations and said there is no problem, we are not doing anything. Then a few days ago he met with the California delegation and stiffed them in the same way.

Now it turns out in today's newspaper, which I will enter into the RECORD, an article from the Washington Post, they are in retreat. They are going to go down to FERC and finally ask FERC to do what the law says it must do, that is, cap unreasonable prices in electricity.

The United States west of the Rockies has been ignored by this administration, but they are now en route. They are running for the hills. They have dropped their guns. They have torn off their uniforms, and they are running to hide down at FERC.

They are not going to get away with putting in something down at FERC that just does a little something. We want real caps on those gougers. Vote for the Anti-Gouging Act of 2001.

[From the Washington Post, June 14, 2001]

FERC LIKELY TO PUT NEW LIMITS ON CALIFORNIA ENERGY PRICES

(By Mike Allen and Juliet Eilperin)

A federal agency plans to impose new limits on California energy prices next week, according to senior government officials, a move that would offer President Bush and Republican lawmakers relief from an increasingly thorny political problem in the nation's largest state.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission plans to hold a special meeting Monday to take up possible solutions to California's power crunch. And officials said yesterday the leading proposal would control the wholesale price of electricity throughout the West around the clock.

Such a measure would expand a rule that applies only to California and only during the most severe power shortages. Gov. Gray Davis (D) has said the current program is shot full of loopholes and does not benefit consumers. Under the new proposal, the government would set a target price—generous enough to permit a profit for efficient producers—and companies would have to justify higher prices in writing, officials said.

The move comes as concern is growing among congressional Republicans that the Bush administration and its GOP allies were losing the political battle over California's energy crisis—and that it could affect the party's fortunes in next year's elections.

House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Tex.) has assigned a team of Republicans to help deflect legislative attacks on Bush's energy policies, and has instructed members to deliver daily floor speeches defending the administration's plans. House Republicans took up Bush's broader energy bill—which focuses on stepping up production—in earnest yesterday in an effort to pass it by midsummer.

Congressional Democrats have been increasing pressure on the administration to

address quickly the skyrocketing electricity prices and power shortages in Western states. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn), the new chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, plans to hold a hearing Wednesday—two days after the commission meeting—to examine federal regulation of energy, and his main witness will be Davis.

House negotiations on a bipartisan emergency energy bill for California broke down last week just as Democrats were taking control of the Senate. In response, Rep. W. J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-La.), chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and 14 other GOP lawmakers seized on a proposal by Rep. Doug Ose (R-Calif.) to make FERC's rules apply around the clock. Tauzin wrote FERC Chairman Curt Hebert Jr. to urge its adoption.

Hebert scheduled the unusual FERC meeting shortly thereafter. "Nobody would disagree with the urgency of the situation and the need for the commission to act promptly. We're working feverishly to do that," said Walter Ferguson, Hebert's chief of staff.

The commission, composed of three Republicans and two Democrats, is independent. Members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Bush and key members of the commission have said repeatedly that they have ideological and practical objections to an absolute cap on the wholesale price of electricity, which Davis has argued is the best way to prevent electricity from becoming unaffordable this summer.

Federal officials said the commission's less-stringent measure—"face-saving," Democrats called it—would help stabilize power prices while overcoming White House and commission members' objections to a cap.

"We aren't overly concerned that this will discourage generation like real price controls would," a White House official said. "A hard cap would be disaster. It would cause electricity generators to shut down."

Another White House official said that the administration would not take a formal position until the commission has voted and the details are clear, but added that the measure sounded acceptable "in theory."

"The president has been calling on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to be vigilant in making sure that illegal price gouging does not occur in California or elsewhere," the official said.

A California Democratic official said, "They realized they have been taking a beating on this issue, both in California and nationally. This is the equivalent of Bush saying, 'Uncle.'"

However, Davis said at a news conference in Sacramento that he remains "a doubting Thomas" about the prospects for dramatic action from the commission. "I've been fighting FERC for over a year," he said. "The federal government has not been doing its job. If they finally do, I'll say, 'It's about time, but thank you.'"

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said the measure being considered "would be a flexible price cap, set at the price of least-efficient megawatt of the least-efficient plant."

"Price mitigation appears to be a way to avoid using the words 'price cap' or 'cost-based rate,' which some members of FERC and the Bush administration find objectionable," Feinstein said. "I don't care what they call it, as long as they get the job done."

In April, FERC issued a price restraint plan that established cost-based price ceilings for generators selling wholesale power